

Covello Returns to Assist KDHE Training to Officials

To enhance the risk and crisis communication skills of public health and safety officials in Kansas, KDHE, in conjunction with the Heartland Center at St Louis University, brought Vincent T. Covello, Ph.D., to Kansas to lead seminars in Topeka and Pittsburg on April 17-18. More than 125 public health, public safety, hospital and local government officials attend one of the two sessions, including invited guests from Missouri and Arkansas who participate in regional preparedness efforts with Kansas officials.

Covello also comes to Kansas annually to present to the Kansas Public Health Leadership Institute (KPHLI) at the WALD Center in Wichita and conducted a full-day session there again on April 20 for the third time. Each KPHLI group consists of between 25-40 public health officials from across the state who are nominated by their peers for their excellence in the public health field.



Dr. Covello

During his presentations, Covello stressed the importance of “message preparation” and covered the use of communication templates to assist in the formation of clear, concise messages that alert the public without undue alarm. Several video clips were shown to demonstrate mistakes made by communicators during Hurricane Katrina and other emergencies that were threats to the public health in the past.

Covello also informed attendees of the availability of a handbook and field guide he authored for the World Health Organization with Randall Hyer, MD, PhD, MPH, titled “Effective Media Communication During Public Health Emergencies.” He cited KDHE Office of Communication staffers Mike Cameron and Mike Heideman as contributors to both publications.

Covello is a nationally and internationally recognized trainer, researcher, consultant and expert on Risk Communications. He is the founder and Director of the Center for Risk Communication and has authored over 75 published articles in scientific journals and has authored or edited over 25 books. He has chaired over 30 national and international conferences on risk assessment, management, and communication. He has also directed workshops and training sessions on risk communication for over 200 Fortune 500 companies and over 200 government agencies.

Among his most recent consulting assignments, Covello has worked on a diverse set of issues, including mad cow disease, West Nile Virus, SARS, bioterrorism, pandemic influenza, the tsunami in SE Asia and the subway bombings in London.

Covello and his staff trained NYC Mayor Rudolph Giuliani before and after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center on 9/11/2001. The CDC and the World Health Organization regularly seek his advice on Risk Communication issues.

Covello has now conducted nine seminars and one message-mapping workshop in Kansas since 2003.